

## [Interview with Mrs. Pauline Myer]

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AUG 17 1936

Janet Smith, Field Worker

About 1500 words

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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. PAULINE MYER.

Soon after she was married in 1875, Pauline Myer travelled from her home in San Francisco to join her husband in New Mexico. He had gone on ahead so that he might investigate the country. He [wrote?] her that it was a rough place, and so, she says, she found it. But her husband had good prospects in the wool business there, and she was eager to see a new country. She took the train from San Francisco to Ogden, Utah. After a [?] wait she took another train for Cheyenne, Wyoming. There she had to stay over a day before she could make connections south to Denver. In Denver she changed again for Pueblo which was as far south as the train went.

Her husband, Bernard Meyer met her in Pueblo with an "ambulance", as covered wagons more called in New Mexico. It was a fine ambulance, Mrs. Myer said, with a leather covering. He had a fine pair of horses too. But the journey to Rio Puerco, New Mexico, she hardly likes to talk about. It was so full of hardships and discomforts. It rained and the adobs roads were inches deep in mud. They changed horses frequently. Usually the change was from bad to worse. The country seemed like a foreign land to her. In the houses where they stopped for the night, the women could not understand her, and they

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had strange ways of cooking. They patted lumps of dough into [?] round thin cake-like [C18?] - 6/5/[41?] - Nebraska 2 objects called "tortillas". When her husband asked for directions, the men seemed too / indolent even to point. They pursed their lips, and lifted their chins in the general direction they wished to indicate and said ["allo"?] (ah-ee). It was only occasionally that she saw an American face, and then she says she was "tickled".

After a journey of about two weeks, she reached her new home in [ Rio Puerco ?], a little Mexican settlement about twenty-five miles south west of Albuquerque in Bernalillo County. Mr. Meyer had a general merchandise store there. He sold the natives sugar and coffee and yards of calico for shirts and dresses, shoes and nails and kerosene oil. When Mr. Meyer was away buying sheep, Mrs. Meyer had to tend the store. At first she couldn't understand a thing the people said to her but she very soon learned the names of most of the articles in the store and how to [?] use simple greetings "buenas dias" and "come la va!". Even after she was able to speak their language fairly easily, their brown faces seemed strange to her. "I suppose it would be right in style now", she said, "but in those days I thought I'd never seen anything like those women sitting around the store with cigarettes in their mouths, always laughing and happy."

Mrs. Meyer and her husband lived in a big adobe house, the best in town, she said. It was built around a "placita" — a kind of courtyard, she explained, with the building all around it. She rather liked her house for it was always cool in summer, and though it was not always warm in winter the fireplaces in one corner of almost every room were nice. It was hard for her to get used to the idea of having mud floors, but [Natividad?], who came to work for her knew how to 3 sprinkle them and [?] sweep them with little straw brooms, so that they were hard and almost smooth.

In about a year her first baby was born and there was no [?] time to get a doctor from Albuquerque which was 25 miles away. Whenever the baby was sick they had to write to the doctor describing his symptoms and the doctor would sent back instructions and medicine. That took a long time and the mail service was unreliable. If the people at

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the post office felt like it they gave you your letters and if they didn't they said there weren't any. The safest way was to send somebody on horseback he twenty five miles to Albuquerque with a note. One or twice there was an epidemic — smallpox and whooping cough. The time of the smallpox epidemic Mrs. Myer said that she worried for fear the baby would get it and her husband worried about her and the baby too. "But / it stopped at the house on one side of us, passed over our house, and stopped again at the one on the other side." Of-course there was no such thing as quarantine. Mr. Meyer ordered the people to stay out of the store but they would come in laughing at him for being [?] afraid of them. "They just visited around from one to another and spread the disease. They never seemed to be at all afraid of it, but some of them died just the same. Then there would be a "[belerie"?], and we could hear them singing all night long. They would come to the store and buy up lots of food and spend the night praying and eating and singing around the dead one."

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There were no amusements and Mrs. Myer was far from her family and friends, but she never had time to be lonely. Later when she and her husband moved to Old Town in Albuquerque, there was occasional "bailles" "bailes" given by the Mexicans. At first her husband used to take her if he thought the dance would be any way [respectble?], but it almost always ended in a fight. Usually somebody would shoot the lights out and the women would scream, and her husband would hustle he out the back door as fast as he could. What they fought about she didn't know, some little thing, or maybe nothing. But it was rare "baille" "baile" that ended without a fight, and after awhile her husband decided not to take her. She guessed she wasn't missing much. While she was in Rio Puerco there weren't even "bailles" "bailes" to go to, but sometimes there was excitement of a little different kind.

Mrs. Myer remembers one bitter cold night when she was awakened by / a loud knocking at the gate.

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"It was all hours of the night", she said. "It must have been midnight at the least, and I heard a great commotion outside."

She awakened her husband. "Ben, get up, there's someone knocking at the door. gat. "

Ben rolled over. "Let 'em knock."

In a minute she shook him again. "Ben, they're still knocking. Who could it be at this time of night ? "

"Whoever it is, I'm not moving on a bitter cold night like this. They can go on."

But they heard people scrambling over the high wall, and in a minute the knocks began again at the door of the house.

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"Who's there?" Mr. Myer called out.

"Open the door", was the answer.

"Not until I know who's there," her husband called back.

"You open that door, if you know what's good for you," was the reply.

Mr. Myer got out of his warm bed then, and opened the door. Three tough looking men came in with the blast of cold air. Mrs. Myer said they were as frightful a looking set of men as you could want to see, armed to the teeth with guns and knives —" a / regular artillery".

One of them spoke very good English. He demanded food and hot coffee and a warm bed to sleep in.

There was nothing [for?] Mrs. Myer to do but get up too and fix them a meal. There was only one bed in the house besides the baby's cradle, so she and her husband were forced

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to go to the store for a / new mattress and some blankets which they put on the dining room floor, and the three men / went to sleep in their warm bed. They demanded to be called early in the morning and ordered a warm breakfast.

Mrs. Meyer said her husband woke her before daybreak and she hurried to prepare breakfast as they were both anxious to get the men out of the house. The three men ate in a hurry.

Before riding away, they stopped at the store. Mr. Meyer had a newv new saddle. He had paid sixty dollars for it and was very proud of it. One of the men wanted it.

“Not that saddle? saddle,” Mr. Myer said. “You can have anything else, but not that saddle.” 6 Dup

However, as Mrs. Myer said, there was no use arguing with that kind of people. They rode away with the saddle.

Both Mrs. Myer and her husband were glad to see them go. an hour or two later Mrs. Meyer looked out the window and saw a cloud of dust coming down the road. She knew that meant more men on horseback. She ran to the store to warn her husband, but he was already standing in the doorway watching it.

As the cloud came nearer they could distinguish one man riding in the lead and ten or so behind. In another minute they saw that it was the sherriff with a posse. They were heavily armed and pulled up their horses to ask Mr. Myer if he had seen three men on horseback. He told them [?] the story of the pervious night and pointed to the northwest which was the direction the men had taken.

Several days later Mrs. Meyer and her husband heard that the sheriff and his men had overtaken the three men an had taken them [?] to Bernalillo by another route. There

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they hanged all three at once from the same [?] huge cottonwood tree. Their names she couldn't remember but she knew they had robbed and killed before coming to her house.

Mrs. Meyer lived with her son at 1511 East Roma, Albuquerque. She is a pretty little old lady with high pink cheeks and blue eyes. She is friendly and willing to talk about the old days though she says it has been so long and things are so different now that it is hard for her to remember much. At that though she says her memory is better than any of her children's.